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Message Text

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S E C R E T SALT TWO GENEVA 1441

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E.O. 11652: XGDSI
TAGS: PARM
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR JOHNSON'S STATEMENT OF MARCH 5, 1974,
(SALT TWO -- 395)

THE FOLLOWING IS STATEMENT DELIVERED BY AMBASSADOR
JOHNSON AT THE SALT TWO MEETING OF MARCH 5, 1974.
STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOHNSON
MARCH 5, 1974
MR. MINISTER:
I
IN THE COURSE OF OUR CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS, I HAVE SET FORTH
THE CONCEPT OF CONSTRAINING THE POTENTIAL OF ICBM'S EQUIPPED WITH
MIRV'S BY LIMITING THE THROW-WEIGHT OF THESE SYSTEMS TO AN EQUAL
AGGREGATE LEVEL. TODAY I WANT FURTHER TO DISCUSS SOME OF THE
MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS WHICH UNDERLIE THIS CONCEPT.
II
I BELIEVE WE BOTH CAN AGREE THAT THE SURVIVABILITY OF STRA-
TEGIC DETERRENT FORCES IS BASIC TO THE STRATEGIC BALANCE BETWEEN
OUR TWO COUNTRIES. IF EITHER SIDE SHOULD PERCEIVE THAT A MAJOR
ELEMENT OF ITS RETALIATORY FORCES IS BECOMING VULNERABLE, THE
STABILITY OF THE STRATEGIC BALANCE BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES WOULD BE
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JEOPARDIZED.

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OF THE STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS POSSESSED BY THE TWO SIDES, IT IS THE ICBM'S WHICH ARE POTENTIALLY THE MOST VULNERABLE SYSTEM. IN A CRISIS SITUATION, IT IS THE DECISION CONCERNING ICBM'S WHICH WOULD BE THE MOST CRITICAL AND TIME-SENSITIVE. BY CONTRAST, IN A RETALIATORY ROLE, SLBM'S ARE NOT UNDER THE SAME TIME PRESSURE AS ICBM'S; HEAVY BOMBERS CAN BE RECALLED. ICBM'S HAVE ANOTHER DE-STABILIZING CHARACTERISTIC; THEY POSE THE MOST IMMEDIATE POTENTIAL THREAT TO THE SURVIVABILITY OF A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THE FORCES OF THE OTHER SIDE. THUS, IT IS ICBM'S WHICH ARE MOST LIKELY TO UPSET THE STABILITY OF THE STRATEGIC BALANCE BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

AS I HAVE ALREADY NOTED, IT FOLLOWS THAT AS THE AGGREGATE THROW-WEIGHT OF ICBM'S EQUIPPED WITH MIRV'S INCREASES, SO DOES THE DESTRUCTIVE POTENTIAL OF THE ICBM FORCE, WHICH IN TURN COULD JEOPARDIZE THE STABILITY OF THE STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP. IN THE ABSENCE OF APPROPRIATE CONSTRAINTS, BOTH SIDES HAVE THE POTENTIAL CAPABILITY OF DEPLOYING A SUBSTANTIAL THROW-WEIGHT OF ICBM'S EQUIPPED WITH MIRV'S IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LIMITATIONS ON ICBM'S EQUIPPED WITH MIRV'S POSES THE MOST URGENT TASK BEFORE US.

IN OUR VIEW, THROW-WEIGHT PROVIDES THE MOST EQUITABLE INDEX OF COMPARISON FOR THESE SYSTEMS. IT DETERMINES THE POTENTIAL COMBINA-TION OF NUMBER AND WEIGHT OF REENTRY VEHICLES WHICH AN ICBM CAN CARRY. THUS, IT CONSTITUTES AN OBJECTIVE MEASURE OF THE DESTRUC-TIVE POTENTIAL OF A MIRV'ED ICBM. MOREOVER, THE THROW-WEIGHT OF MIRV-ED ICBM'S, UNLIKE OTHER POSSIBLE INDICES, SUCH AS MISSILE VOLUME, IS RELATIVELY INSENSITIVE TO DIFFERENCES IN BOOSTER DESIGN APPROACH OR TECHNOLOGY BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES.

BY ITS RECENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS THE SOVIET SIDE HAS SHOWN THAT IT RECOGNIZES THE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THROW-WEIGHT OF MIRV-ED ICBM'S. THE NEW SOVIET ICBM'S CURRENTLY BEING TESTED WITH MIRV'S HAVE LARGE THROW-WEIGHT, IN SOME CASES SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER THAN THAT OF THE OLDER ICBM'S WITHOUT MIRV'S WHICH THESE NEW SYSTEMS APPEAR INTENDED TO REPLACE. THE TESTING OF THESE NEW ICBM'S IS PROCEEDING AT A RAPID PACE.

THE U.S. CONCEPT DOES NOT ENVISAGE THAT ONE SIDE ACCEPT A POSITION OF INEQUALITY IN MIRV-ED ICBM SYSTEMS. ON THE CONTRARY, IT WOULD CONSTRAIN AT AN EQUAL LEVEL FOR BOTH SIDES THE DESTRUCT-IVE POTENTIAL OF THESE WEAPONS. THUS OUR CONCEPT WOULD NOT PROVIDE A UNILATERAL ADVANTAGE TO EITHER SIDE, BUT WOULD SERVE TO BENEFIT

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BOTH. THE EQUAL CEILING ON MIRV-ED ICBM THROW-WEIGHT WOULD BE FORMULATED SUCH AS TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE FLEXIBILITY IN DEPLOYMENT OF MIRV-ED ICBM'S, SUBJECT TO AGREED LIMITATIONS TO ASSURE ADEQUATE VERIFICATION BY NATIONAL TECHNICAL MEANS.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR TO CONSIDER IS THAT AN UNLIMITED INCREASE IN MIRV-ED ICBM THROW-WEIGHT COULD MAKE MORE DIFFICULT MUTUAL PHASED REDUCTIONS OF STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS. ALSO, IF WE FAIL TO PLACE EQUITABLE LIMITS ON THESE SYSTEMS, WE WOULD LEAVE

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UNCHECKED AN ARMS COMPETITION WHICH COULD BE BOTH COSTLY AND DESTABILIZING FOR BOTH SIDES.

WITH RESPECT TO OUR CONCEPT FOR EQUAL LIMITS FOR THE TWO SIDES ON THE AGGREGATE THROW-WEIGHT OF ICBM'S EQUIPPED WITH MIRV'S, WE HAVE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION THE QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE SOVIET DELEGATION REGARDING SLBM'S EQUIPPED WITH MIRV'S. IN THIS CONNECTION, PROVIDED THE SOVIET SIDE WILL AGREE TO LIMIT ICBM MIRV THROW-WEIGHT TO EQUAL AGGREGATE LEVELS, THE UNITED STATES IS PREPARED TO CONSIDER LIMITATIONS ON SLBM MIRV THROW-WEIGHT AS WELL.

III

MR. MINISTER, I HAVE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTROLLING MIRV'S ON ICBM'S PROMPTLY IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE SURVIVABILITY OF DETERRENT FORCES, ENHANCE STRATEGIC STABILITY, AND REDUCE THE RISK OF NUCLEAR WAR. I BELIEVE THAT AN ACTIVE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH YOUR DELEGATION ON THE QUESTION OF THESE SYSTEMS WOULD BE HELPFUL IN PROVIDING A FOUNDATION FOR PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. JOHNSON

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